

MARYLAND STATE BOARD OF VICTIM SERVICES MEETING

MINUTES

Wednesday, September 11, 2013
Frederick County Law Enforcement Center

ATTENDEES

BOARD MEMBERS: Ellen Alexander, Dario Broccolino, Laurie Rajala on behalf of Tammy Brown, Jessica Dickerson, Linda Fleischer, Rea Goldfinger and Bonnita Spikes.

STAFF: Anne Litecky.

GUESTS: Patty Amery, The Honorable J. Charles Smith, Buzz Working, Tim Haven, Joanna Shapiro, Major Gary Morton, Theresa Hiegel, Randy Martin, Captain Richard Heatherington, Rosario Alston, Dave Schultz, Suellen Cramer, Capt. Todd May, Det. Sergeant Wayne Wachsmuth, Hilary Young, Kendall Ridgley, William Keefer, Sharon Jacko, Mary Ellis, Kristin Dunn, Lynn Davis, Kathleen Balinski, Eileen Meier, Linda Hardman, Michaela, Lisae Jordon, Pauline Mandel, Jane Henderson, Michelle Lee, Vivian Pender, Michelle Schafer and Arlene Friedman.

WELCOME/CALL TO ORDER: Ellen Alexander, Chair, began the meeting at approximately 10:40 a.m. A special note of thanks to the Frederick County State's Attorney's Office for their assistance with hosting today's meeting. Ellen explained one of the purposes of the State Board is to make recommendations to the Governor. Based on today's meeting, information shared will be included in the recommendations to the Governor. Past State Board meetings on the road have proven to be very beneficial and informative for members.

MINUTES:

- Motion: July 10, 2013 State Board meeting. Due to a total of six members in attendance, a quorum was not met; therefore, the State Coordinator will seek a vote electronically from the members.
- Vote: none taken.

COMMUNITY SPEAKERS

- ❖ The Honorable J. Charles Smith, State's Attorney for Frederick County
 - Patty Amery, Victim Service Provider in the Juvenile Division
 - Overview provided of the criminal court process and services to crime victims
 - Need: Spanish/Bilingual interpreter needed as a liaison to community and to assist the court legal clinic attorney
 - Need: DV designated prosecutor
 - Best Practice: In the Juvenile Division, the service provider processes restitution forms with a payment plan that is later attached to the court order (cc to DJS) for the prosecutors to present in court, no case is allowed to pass to Central Collections Unit (CCU), wage garnishment is enforced (Master signs)
- ❖ Buzz Working, Clerk of the Court for Frederick County
 - Monthly report submitted to AOC from time of filing a case to the end, Report helps with checks and balances for *Crime Victim Notification and Demand for Rights form* (CVNF)
 - Best practice: CVNF files are flagged. Frederick County Clerk's Office has its own form and processing system. Clerk has a history of not missing any CVNFs (Detention centers are most often missed when not attached to the commitment order)

- Domestic Violence (DV) cases are a priority and carefully monitored by the Clerk's Office to alert victims of dangerous defendant status changes in custody or parole/probation. Concern for DV cases that are missing an alert (Two DV case histories shared)
- VINE is referred
- Assistant State's Attorneys are good about reminding Judges of CVNFs
- Recently GOCCP and MSP rolled out a check mark (coding) system on *Uniform Court Reporting Form* for Judges in District and Circuit court DV related cases and for Protective Orders (Prosecutors remind judges)
- ❖ Tim Haven, District Court Commissioner
 - Needs: Spanish and interpreters for the deaf in the off hours (Montgomery County has a closed circuit TV system for interpretation), interpreter phone system may be helpful as well
 - Three to four Spanish hearings per day
- ❖ Joanna Shapiro, Court Legal Clinic
 - The Clinic helps crime victims represent themselves in court through guidance, information and support
 - Court legal clinic model is the best way to empower crime victims seeking legal assistance
 - Spanish interpreter is very helpful in court (interpreters do not always solve all the challenges)
 - Nine to fifteen crime victims assisted per day (most challenging are DV cases involving children; Custody is a challenge; Dangerous cases pegged a "Time Bomb" meaning kids are in danger) Not sure of the answer. Custody evaluations are helpful, but may take months through the court system
 - Needed: Legislation to address the challenge of DV custody cases – not specific
- ❖ Major Gary Morton, Frederick County Sheriff's Office

As the operations commander, most important is to meet the needs of the community, mental health, DV, intervention/triage, death notifications

 - Challenges: less funding this year, increase in calls, lost ADT free service to provide DV protective order victims security systems (Victims relied on ADT – big loss)
 - Theresa Hiegel, Victim Service Provider is on call 24/7, provides community support, follow up on cases, and outreach
 - Refers victims to VINE, however problems with VINE going offline periodically (VINE does alert victims when offline, was down 3 to 4 months last year due to a new booking system install)
 - Need: advocates for the hearing impaired (Would like to hear more about Montgomery County's system)
 - Need: Funds to manage weapons and firearms collections, holding and delivery of Protective Orders (mandated), Overwhelming on staff time and space is a challenge
 - Ellen promised to provide numerous agencies with information about services provided in Montgomery County to the hearing impaired and other underserved crime victims.
- ❖ Randy Martin, Frederick County Detention Center
 - CVNF: upon receipt of form from SAO or Clerk of the Court, information is entered in case management system with an alert status and the CVNF is attached to the inmate's file when transferred to DOC
 - Victim safeguards: call victim at time of release and mail letter
- ❖ Captain Richard Heatherington, Frederick Police Department
 - Victim Witness Unit (VWU): Rosario Alston, Dave Schultz, Suellen Cramer
 - VWU: provides outreach, death notification, response to crime victims, operates a case management system (CMS), and is always looking to improve services
 - Provides mandated law enforcement brochure to all crime victims
 - Public awareness key for Department

- New Discovery Rule and CMS: no sensitive information in system
 - New project: a local government and community plan for natural and unnatural disasters (with database) that is coordinated with FBI and local agencies
 - Needs: outreach staff for underreported crimes in the underserved and homeless communities due in part to barriers in illegal status, language, economic, substance abuse, etc
- ❖ Lt. Todd May, Maryland State Police
- Det. Sergeant Wayne Wachsmuth: DV Unit has a specialized detective and staff to provides 48 hour and 7 day follow-up on al DV calls/cases, retrieves fire arms, and issues warrants through Commissioner's Office
 - Barriers: civil child custody orders: MSP legal counsel does not support enforcing child custody orders; Will respond to call, but there to keep the peace and make sure child is safe, refer victims to the courts; Exception is if a child has been stolen by a non-custodial parent then refer to the court and file formal charges (MSP would benefit having a service provider)
 - Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Child Advocacy Center (CAC) and Child Protective Services (CPS), joint investigations performed on cases
 - Need: victim service provider to follow up on MSP cases (currently relying on officers and Theresa at the Sheriff's Office)
- ❖ Hilary Young, Kendall Ridgley, Dept. of Public Safety and Correctional Services, Community Supervision (parole and probation)
- DV is a priority, MD Network Against Domestic Violence (MNADV) provides ongoing training on utilizing Lethality Assessment
 - DV victims receive offender status letters and have ongoing contact with victim advocates
 - Collaboration with other local agencies and organizations
 - Barriers: Spanish interpreters and services are few in county (Refer to Baltimore)
 - High profile/high risk individuals released from detention center, Rosario assists with contacting victims
 - Home visits with parole/probationers: would like to always know when there is a history of weapon/firearms
 - Unger Case: Two cases coming up in County
- ❖ William Keefer, Department of Juvenile Services
- Melissa Rice: Victim Notification Liaison for Frederick County
 - Ensuring victims' rights are upheld: CVNF and victim impact statements (VIS) provided for some crime victims
 - Special projects: taken on annually, Last one was improving the VIS process
 - Challenges: restitution collections specialist (Debbie Dorsette) to follow up on restitution cases, Many respondents cannot pay victims due to financial problems, payment plans are encouraged; Court orders not always clear to agents and advocates (joint and several being one)
- ❖ Sharon Jacko and Mary Ellis, Heartly House (acting executive directors)
- Provide DV and sexual assault services for Frederick County
 - Over 800 people served this year: legal services, safe house, crisis, group and individual counseling, etc
 - Barriers: treating rape victims. This year there is a 20% increase in the National average for stranger rape compared to Frederick County's 43% increase in reported rape cases this year
 - Recommendations: yoga and body work that provide a healing benefit along with counseling for victims (Not considered necessary by some funding sources)
 - Needs: SAFE nurses, bilingual counselors for services and shelter, hearing impaired service advocate/services

- ❖ Kristin Dunn, Child Protective Services
 - Majority of cases are referred by other county agencies for
 - Lethality assessments conducted in some cases (Recommend that lethality question #2, “Has the perpetrator ever threatened you or one of the children?” be divided into two questions or add one question “Who is the threat against?” (if there is a threat against the child from the mother or father that is different than the threat coming from outside the home - triage the threats)
 - Cases are categorized by risk, low to high, which involves an investigative approach
 - Barriers: Language and the hearing impaired services
- ❖ Kathleen Balinski, Child Advocacy Center
 - CAC approximately 10 years old
 - Meets twice a month with law enforcement, SAO, CPS, hospital, etc
 - Refer families to CICB, counseling, medical team for an exam (Experience not negative for child), therapy, legal counselor
 - Challenges: additional advocates, as county grows, more children need services
 - Goal: to provide and encourage safe environments for children
- ❖ Eileen Meier, Frederick Memorial Hospital
 - SAFE nurse and attorney
 - The hospital provides on-call SAFE nurse services for sexual assault victims
 - SAFE nurse services: provided an overview of services
 - Collaboration with law enforcement, SAO, Heartly House, and other agencies
 - Women in the V.A.: new program to address sexual assault
 - SAFE Nurse Coordinator resigned: finalizing position replacement soon
 - Pediatric SAFE nurse: specialized services, extensive training
- ❖ Linda Hardman, Community Mediation & Conflict Resolution Center (CALM)
 - Mediation services provided by volunteer professionals, an extremely useful and effective service when individuals are not dangerous; Includes anger management
 - Mediation is an underutilized service
 - Services for families and individuals
 - Does not mediate individuals with a Protective Order
 - Referrals
 - DV-Lethality Assessment tool used
 - 200 % increase in mediation services over the last year

Meeting Adjourned: **The Honorable J. Charles Smith and Patty Amery, State’s Attorney’s Office were thanked for hosting today’s meeting.** Guests were thanked for their participation. The meeting adjourned at approximately 1:00 p.m.

**The next Board meeting will be held
at
10:00 a.m. on Wednesday, November 6, 2013
Anne Arundel County Police Department Headquarters in Millersville, MD**